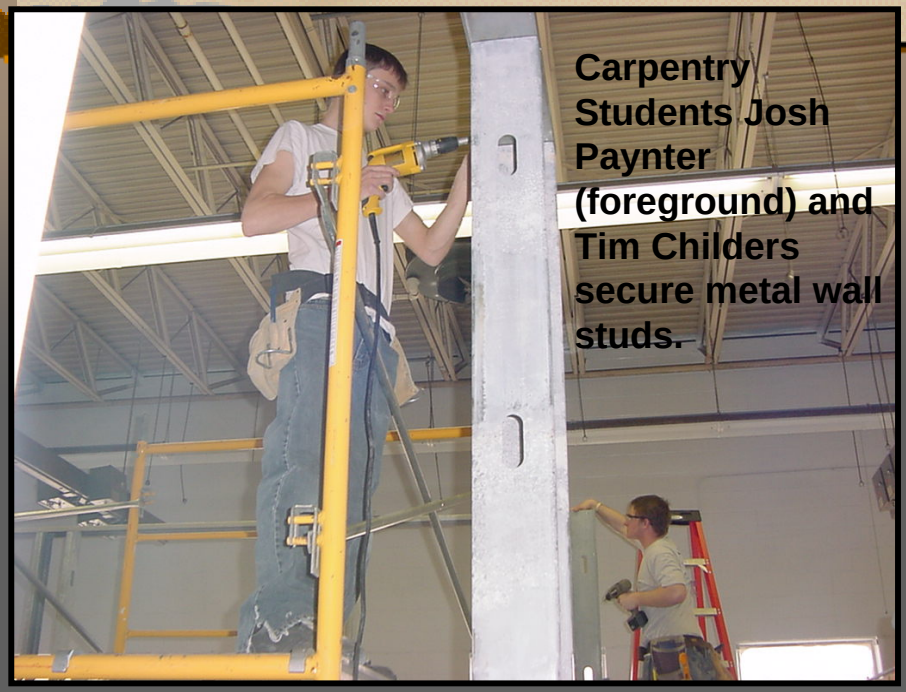
Collaborative Project at Clark Co. ATC Will Result in New Electricity Classroom

When academic and technical educators collaborate, anything is possible. During this school year, Clark Co. ATC Principal Karen Bothun worked with George Rogers Clark High School Tech Prep Coordinator Roger Botkin and the Clark Co. Board of Education to create a worthwhile project to integrate academic principles and theory with the practical application taught through technical education programs. The combined efforts resulted in a bold move of constructing an electricity classroom at the ATC using the industrial maintenance technology lab.

This has been and continues to be a huge project. The Board of Education, high school and ATC have worked together during every step of the process and even wrote a Tech Prep grant to help fund some of the activities. It has been a true joint effort among all the parties. While substantial financial support has been given by the Clark Co. Board of Education, the Tech Prep grant has also been jointly directed toward the project.

“We want to profoundly thank the Clark Co. Board of Education for their cooperation and financial support of the project and their willingness to allow Clark Co. ATC students to make major building improvements,” says Bothun. “From a historical standpoint, this is an unprecedented vote of confidence in the talents, skill and work ethic of our students to provide an industry standard professional classroom. This is a true reflection of the quality instruction being provided by Mr. Richard Butcher, our carpentry instructor and Mr. Ronald Simpson, our electrical technology instructor. We are grateful for this opportunity and believe this has been a mutually beneficial project.”



Carpentry Students Josh Paynter (foreground) and Tim Childers secure metal wall studs.

Carpentry Students Travis Penniman, (front) and Stephen Farmer are marking metal wall studs for cutting.

Advanced carpentry and electricity students have integrated with the math class at the high school for the purpose of understanding the relevance of math applications in real world projects.

"It's been a problem solving process during each step and I am extremely proud of my carpentry students for their interest and effort in meeting all the challenges placed before them," says Butcher. "It's amazing what our kids are capable of and how they have developed during this entire process. We have worked together as a team to reach our goals because our students have performed in a professional manner using the skills they have learned in the program."

In my opinion, this collaborative effort has taken on a new meaning because as we worked through the scope of the project, minds turned to collaboration and we all stepped up to the plate to ensure initial success of developing the process," says Simpson. "The project began in earnest once the plans were revised and approved, and the funding was appropriated. It became more than just another construction project - it became a learning opportunity. We have worked together to reinforce the skills we are teaching in our respective classrooms and labs, but just as important, we are teaching our students the need for collaboration and this project is proof of how important it is that everyone works together, or nothing is completed."

The construction and wiring of the classroom are expected to be completed by the end of this school year. Currently, the walls have been constructed and the electrical system is in place. Another value added piece of the project is that students have had an opportunity to work with Clark Co. Buildings and Grounds Supervisor Keith Raker and members of his maintenance department.

Russell Gentry, an electrical technology student, is measuring for conduit in the ceiling of the classroom.

Future Plans

Once the new electricity classroom is completed, additional plans are to build a new computer laboratory /community-meeting room by renovating the second floor of the old industrial maintenance technology classroom. However, this will not begin until the next school year.

"Renovating the old second floor will provide us with a room dedicated to a state of the art computer laboratory that every program teacher can access to improve learning. We will also use the computer lab for community education courses," says Bothun. "We are pleased that our Information Technology Instructor James Garrison can work with his students in the overall process of wiring that room to industry standards. The students amaze me every day with their talents and understanding of the computer world."

"My students will be involved in the network wiring installation and management of the process, as well as setting up a server, router, hub and 25 workstations. They will also be responsible for installing all the software as needed for the computers," says Garrison. "Excluding hardware costs, our information technology students are providing all the services to complete the project and will ultimately save approximately $15,000 in overall costs.

Electrical Technology Student Corey Martin, who was a finalist in this year's KY Tech Student of the Year, is bending conduit.

"Outside of the collaborative efforts to develop this venture, the greatest accomplishment of this endeavor is that students will have had the opportunity to experience a major construction project that is greater in scope than what they would have developed and built during a normal school year without this project," says Bothun. "It's been a winning combination for everyone and we a pleased with the progress."

Photo at right: Electrical Technology Student Devon Garland has the job of bending conduit for the power system.

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